

M^{rs} Barry in the Character of Horatia!



The heart which death like mine, must break to be at ease!

Act 4.th Scene the last.

Long 1781

Printed & sold by J. Murray & Co. 1781

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ROMAN FATHER.

A

TRAGEDY.

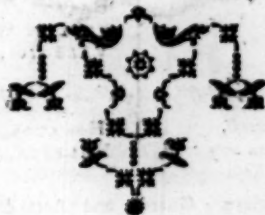
As it is Acted at the

THEATRES - ROYAL

IN

Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden.

Altered from Mr. W. WHITEHEAD.



L O N D O N :

Printed for HARRISON and Co. No 18, Paternoster-Row; and Sold, likewise, by
J. WENMAN, Fleet-Street; and all other Booksellers.

M DCC LXXX.

PROLOGUE.

B RITONS, to-night, in native pomp we come,
True heroes all, from virtuous ancient Rome;
In those far distant times, when Romans knew
The sweets of guarded liberty, like you;
And safe from ill, which force or faction brings,
Saw freedom reign beneath the smile of kings.

Yet from such times, and such plain chiefs as these,
What can we frame a polish'd age to please?
Say, can you listen to the artless woes
Of an old tale, which every school-boy knows?
Where to your hearts alone the scenes apply;
No merit theirs, but pure simplicity.

Our bard has play'd a most adventurous part,
And turn'd upon himself the critic's art:
Stripp'd each luxuriant plume from Fancy's wings,
And torn up similes from vulgar things:
Nay, ev'n each moral, sentimental stroke,
Where not the character but poet spoke,
He lopp'd, as foreign to his chaste design;
Nor spar'd an useless, tho' a golden, line.

These are his arts; if these cannot atone
For all those nameless errors yet unknown,
If, shunning faults which nobler bards commit,
He wants the force to strike th' attentive pit,
Be just, and tell him so; be ask'd advice,
Willing to learn, and would not ask it twice.
Your kind applause may bid him write—beware!
Or kinder censure teach him to forbear.

'Tis there alone they find the joy sincere;
The wife, the parent, and the friend are there.
All else, the veriest rakes themselves must own,
Are but the paltry play-things of the town;
The painted clouds, which glittering tempt the chace,
Then melt in air, and mock the vain embrace.
Well then; the private virtues, 'tis confess'd,
Are the soft inmates of the female breast.
But then, they fill so full that crouded space,
That the poor public seldom finds a place.
And I suspect there's many a fair-one here,
Who pour'd her sorrows on Horatia's bier;
That still retains so much of flesh and blood,
She'd fairly bang the brother, if she could.
Why, ladies, to be sure if that be all,
At your tribunal he must stand or fall.
Whate'er his country or his fire decreed,
You are his judges now, and he must plead.
Like other culprit youths, he wanted grace;
But could have no self-interest in the case.
Had she been wife, or mistress, or a friend,
It might have answer'd some convenient end:
But a mere sister, whom he lov'd—to take
Her life away—and for his country's sake!
Faith, ladies, you may pardon him; indeed
There's very little fear the crime should spread.
True patriots are but rare among the men,
And really might be useful now and then.
Then do not check, by your disapprobation,
A spirit which might rule the British nation,
And still might rule—would you but set the fashion.

EPILOGUE.

L ADIES, by me our courteous author sends
His compliments to all his female friends
And thanks them from his soul for every bright
Indulgent tear which they have shed to-night.
Sorrow in virtue's cause proclaims a mind,
And gives to beauty graces more refin'd.
Oh, who could bear the lowliest form of art,
A cherub's face, without a feeling heart!
'Tis there alone, whatever claims we boast,
'Tis there alone, that men may flatter, and though men may boast,

Dramatis Personæ.

M E N.

FULLUS HOSTILIUS, King of Rome.
HORATIUS, a Roman Senator.
PUBLIUS HORATIUS, his Son.
VALERIUS, a young Patrician.

W O M E N.

HORATIA, Daughter to Horatius.
VALERIA, Sister to Valerius.

Citizens, Guards, and Attendants.

SCENE, ROME.

THE ROMAN FATHER.

ACT I.

SCENE, a Room in Horatius's House.

A Soldier crosses the Stage, Horatia following.

Horatia. **STAY**, soldier. As you parted from my father,

Something I overheard of near concern,
But all imperfectly. Said you not Alba
Was on the brink of fate, and Rome determin'd
This day to crush her haughty rival's power,
Or perish in th' attempt?

Sold. 'Twas so resolv'd

This morning, lady, ere I left the camp.
Our heroes are tir'd out with ling'ring war,
And half-unmeaning fight.

Horatia. Then this day [death,
Is fix'd for death or conquest? [*He bows.*] To me
Whoever conquers! [*Aside.*] I detain you, Sir.
Commend me to my brothers; say, I wish—
But wherefore should I wish? The gods will crown
Their virtues with the just success they merit—
Yet let me ask you, Sir—

Sold. My duty, lady,
Commands me hence. Ere this they have engag'd;
And conquest's self would lose it's charms to me,
Should I not share the danger. [*As the Soldier goes out,*
Enter Valeria, who looks first on the Soldier, and then
on Horatia.

Valeria. My dear Horatia, wherefore wilt thou court
The means to be unhappy? Still enquiring,
Still more to be undone. I heard it too;
And flew to find thee, ere the fatal news.
Had hurt thy quiet, that thou might'st have learnt it
From a friend's tongue, and dress'd in gentler terms.

Horatia. Oh, I am lost, Valeria! lost to virtue.
Ev'n while my country's fate, the fate of Rome,
Hangs on the conqueror's sword, this breast can feel
A softer passion, and divide it's cares.
Alba to me is Rome. Wouldst thou believe it?
I would have sent, by him thou saw'st departing,
Kind wishes to my brothers; but my tongue
Denied it's office, and this rebel heart
Ev'n dreaded their success. Oh, Curatius!

Why art thou there, or why an enemy? [*band,*

Valeria. Forbear this self-reproach; he is thy husband
And who can blame thy fears? If fortune make him
Awhile thy country's foe, she cannot cancel
Vows register'd above. What tho' the priest
Had not confirm'd it at the sacred altar;
Yet were your hearts united, and that union
Approv'd by each consenting parent's choice.
Your brothers lov'd him as a friend, a brother;
And all the ties of kindred pleaded for him,
And still must plead, whate'er our heroes teach us

Of patriot-strength. Our country may demand
We should be wretched, and we must obey;
But never can require us not to feel
That we are miserable: nature there
Will give the lye to virtue.

Horatia. True; yet sure
A Roman virgin should be more than woman.
Are we not early taught to mock at pain,
And look on danger with undaunted eyes?
But what are dangers, what the ghastliest form
Of death itself?—Oh, were I only bid
To rush into the Tiber's foaming wave, or from the
Of yon Tarpeian rock, whose giddy steep [height
Has turn'd me pale with horror at the sight,
I'd think the task were nothing! but to bear
These strange vicissitudes of tort'ring pain,

To fear, to doubt, and to despair as I do—
Valeria. And why despair? Have we so idly learn'd?
The noblest lessons of our infant days,
Our trust above? Does there not still remain
The wretch's last retreat, the gods, Horatia?
'Tis from their awful wills our evils spring,
And at their altars may we find relief.
Say, shall we thither?—Look not thus dejected,
But answer me. A confidence in them,
Ev'n in this crisis of our fate, will calm
Thy troubled soul, and fill thy breast with hope.

Horatia. Talk not of hope. What should I hope?
That Alba conquer?—Curs'd be every thought
Which looks that way!

Valeria. Forbear, forbear, Horatia;
Nor fright me with the thought. Rome cannot fall.
Think on the glorious battles she has fought;
Has she once fail'd, though oft expos'd to danger?
And has not her immortal founder promis'd
That she should rise the mistress of the world?

Horatia. And if Rome conquers, then Horatians die.

Valeria. Why wilt thou form vain images of horror,
Industrious to be wretched? Is it then
Become impossible that Rome should triumph,
And Curatius live? He must, he shall;
Protecting gods shall spread their shields around him,
And love shall combat in Horatia's cause.

Horatia. Think'st thou so meanly of him?—No,
His soul's too great to give me such a trial; [*Valeria,*
Or could it ever come, I think, myself,
Thus lost in love, thus abject as I am,
I should despise the slave who dar'd survive
His country's ruin. Ye immortal powers!
I love his fame too well, his spotless honour,
At least I hope I do, to wish him mine
On any terms which he must blush to own.

Horatius. [*Without.*] What ho! Vindicius.

Horatia. What means that shout?—
Didst thou not wish me to the temple?—Come,

I will attend thee thither; the kind gods
Perhaps may ease this throbbing heart, and spread
At least a temporary calm within.

Valeria. Alas, Horatia, 'tis not to the temple
That thou would'st fly; the shout alone alarms thee.
But do not thus anticipate thy fate;
Why should'st thou learn each chance of varying war.
Stay but an hour perhaps, and thou shalt know
The whole at once.—I'll send—I'll fly myself
To ease thy doubts, and bring thee news of joy.

Horatia. Again, and near too—I must attend thee.

Valeria. Hark! 'tis thy father's voice, he comes
to cheer thee.

Enter Horatius and Valerius.

Horatius. [Entering.] News from the camp, my
child!

Save you, sweet maid! [Seeing Valeria.
Your brother brings the tidings, for, alas!
I am no warrior now; my useless age,
Far from the paths of honour loiters here
In sluggish inactivity at home.
Yet I remember—

Horatia. You'll forgive us, Sir,
If with impatience we expect the tidings.

Horatius. I had forgot; the thoughts of what I was
Engo'st my whole attention.—Pray, young soldier,
Relate it for me; you beheld the scene,
And can report it justly.

Valerius. Gentle lady,
The scene was piteous, though it's end be peace.

Horatia. Peace? O my fluttering heart! by what
kind means?

Valerius. 'Twere tedious, lady, and unnecessary
To paint the disposition of the field;
Suffice it, we were arm'd, and front to front
The adverse legions heard the trumpets sound:
But vain was the alarm, for motionless,
And rapt in thought they stood; the kindred ranks
Had caught each other's eyes, nor dar'd to lift
The fault'ring spear against the breast they lov'd.
Again th' alarm was given, and now they seem'd
Preparing to engage, when once again
They hung their drooping heads, and inward mourn'd;
Then nearer drew, and at the third alarm,
Casting their swords and useless shields aside,
Rush'd to each other's arms.

Horatius. 'Twas so, just so
(Tho' I was then a child, yet I have heard
My mother weeping oft relate the story)
Soft pity touch'd the breasts of mighty chiefs,
Romans and Sabines, when the matrons rush'd
Between their meeting armies, and oppos'd
Their helpless infants, and their heaving breasts
To their advancing swords, and bade them there
Sheath all their vengeance.—But I interrupt you—
Proceed, Valerius, they would hear th' event.

—And yet, methinks, the Albans—pray go on.

Valerius. Our king Hostilius from a rising mound
Beheld the tender interview, and join'd
His friendly tears with theirs; then swift advanc'd,
Ev'n to the thickest press, and cried, My friends,
If thus we love, why are we enemies?
Shall stern ambition, rivalry of power,
Subdue the soft humanity within us?
Are we not join'd by every tie of kindred?
And can we find no method to compose
These jars of honour, these nice principles
Of virtue, which infect the noblest mind?

Horatius. There spoke his country's father! this
transcends

The flight of earth-born kings, whose low ambition
But tends to lay the face of nature waste,
And blast creation!—How was it receiv'd?

Valerius. As he himself could wish, with eager trans-
In short, the Roman and the Alban chiefs [posit
In council have determin'd, that since glory
Must have her victims, and each rival state,
Aspiring to dominion, scorns to yield,
From either army shall be chose three champions
To fight the cause alone, and whate'er state
Shall prove superior, there acknowledg'd power
Shall fix th' imperial seat, and both unite
Beneath one common head.

Horatia. Kind Heaven, I thank thee!
Bless'd be the friendly grief that touch'd their souls!
And bless'd be the tongue, which brings the gentle tid-

Valeria. Now, Horatia, [ings.
Your idle fears are o'er.

Horatia. Yet one remains.
Who are the champions? Are they yet elected?
Has Rome—

Valerius. The Roman chiefs now meet in council,
And ask the presence of the sage Horatius.

Horatius. [After having seemed some time in thought.]
But still, methinks, I like not this, to trust
The Roman cause to such a slender hazard—
Three combatants!—'tis dangerous—

Horatia. [In a fright.] My father!

Horatius. I might, perhaps, prevent it—

Horatia. Do not, Sir,

Oppose the kind decree.

Valerius. Rest satisfied,
Sweet lady, 'tis so solemnly agreed to,
Not even Horatius's advice can shake it. [broils;
Horatius. And yet 'twere well to end these civil

The neighb'ring states might take advantage of them.
—Would I were young again! How glorious
Were death in such a cause!—And yet, who knows,
Some of my boys may be selected for it—
Perhaps may conquer—Grant me that, kind gods,
And close my eyes in transport!—Come, Valerius,
I'll but dispatch some necessary orders,
And straight attend thee.—Daughter, if thou lov'st
Thy brothers, let thy prayers be pour'd to Heav'n,
That one at least may share the glorious task! [Exit.

Valerius. Rome cannot trust her cause to worthier
hands.

They bade me greet you, lady. [To Horatia.

Horatia. [With some hesitation.] My brothers, gentle
Sir, you said were well.

Saw you their noble friends, the Curatii?

The truce, perhaps, permitted it.

Valerius. Yes, lady,

I left them jocund in your brothers tent,
Like friends, whom envious storms awhile had parted,
Joying to meet again.

Horatia. Sent they no message?

Valerius. None, fair-one, but such general saluta-
As friends would bring unbid. [tion

Horatia. Said Caius nothing?

Valerius. Caius?

Horatia. Aye, Caius; did he mention me?

Valerius. 'Twas slightly, if he did, and 'scapes me
O yes, I do remember, when your brother [now—
Ask'd him, in jest, if he had aught to send
To soothe a love-sick maid (your pardon, lady)
He smil'd, and cry'd, Glory's the soldier's mistress.

Horatia. Sir, you'll excuse me—something of im-
portance—

My father may have business—Oh, Valeria!

[Aside to Valeria.
Talk to thy brother, know the fatal truth
I dread to hear, and let me learn to die,

If Curatius has indeed forgot me.

Valerius. She seems disorder'd!

Valeria. Has she not cause?

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Can you administer the baneful potion,
And wonder at th' effect?

Valerius. You talk in riddles! [unfolds,
Valeria. They're riddles, brother, which your heart
Tho' you affect surprise: Was Curiatius
Indeed so cold? Poor shallow artifice,
The trick of hopeleſt love! I ſaw it plainly.
Yet what could you propoſe? An hour's uneaſineſs
To poor Horatia; for be ſure by that time
She ſees him, and your deep-wrought ſchemes are air.

Valerius. What cou'd I do? this peace has ruin'd
me.

While war continued, I had gleams of hope;
Some lucky chance might rid me of my rival,
And time efface his image in her breaſt.

But me——

Valeria. Yes, now you muſt reſolve to follow
Th' advice I gave you firſt, and root this paſſion
Entirely from your heart; for know, ſhe doats,
Ev'n to diſtraction doats on Curiatius;
And every fear ſhe felt, while danger threaten'd,
Will now endear him more.

Valerius. Cruel *Valeria*,
You triumph in my pain!

Valeria. By Heaven, I do not;
I only would extirpate every thought
Which gives you pain, nor leave one fooliſh wiſh
For hope to dally with.

Valerius. I own my error—yet once more aſſiſt me—
Nay, turn not from me, by my ſoul I meant not
To interrupt their loves.—Yet ſhould ſome accident,
'Tis not impoſſible, divide their hearts,
I might perhaps have hope: therefore till marriage
Cuts off all commerce, and confirms me wretched,
Be it thy taſk, my ſiſter, with fond ſto-
ries, Such as our ties of blood may countenance,
To paint thy brother's worth, his power in arms,
His favour with the king,
Then mention many a fair,
No matter whom, that ſighs to call you ſiſter.

Valeria. Well, well, away—Yet tell me, ere you go,
How did this lover talk of his *Horatia*?

Valerius. Why will you mention that ungrateful
ſubject?

Think what you've heard me breathe a thouſand times
When my whole ſoul diſſolv'd in tendereſs;
'Twas rapture all; what lovers only feel,
Or can expreſs when felt. He had been here,
But ſudden orders from the camp detain'd him.
Farewel, *Horatius* waits me—but remember,
My life, nay mote than life, depends on you. [Exit.

Valeria. Poor youth! he knows not how I feel his
Yet dare not ſeem to pity what I feel. [anguiſh,
How ſhall I act betwixt this friend and brother!
Should the ſuſpect his paſſion, ſhe may doubt
My frienſhip too; and yet to tell it her
Were to betray his cauſe. No, let my heart
With the ſame blameleſs caution ſtill proceed;
To each inclining moſt as moſt diſtreſt;
Be juſt to both, and leave to Heav'n the reſt!

ACT II.

SCENE continues.

Enter *Horatia* and *Valeria*.

Horatia. A L A S, *Valeria*,
This ſeeming negligence of *Curiatius*
Betrays a ſecret coldneſs at the heart.
May not long abſence, or the charms of war,
Have damp'd, at leaſt, if not effac'd his paſſion?
I know not what to think.

Valeria. Think, my *Horatia*,
That you're a lover, and have learn'd the art
To riſe vain ſcraples, and torment yourſelf
With every diſtant hint of fancied ill.
Your *Curiatius* ſtill remains the ſame.
My brother idly triſted with your paſſion,
Or might perhaps unheedingly relate
What you too nearly feel. But ſee, your father.

Horatia. He ſeems tranſported; ſure ſome happy
news
Has brought him back thus early. Oh, my heart!
I long, yet dread to aſk him. Speak, *Valeria*.

Enter *Horatius*.

Valeria. You're ſoon return'd, my lord.
Horatius. Return'd, *Valeria*!
My life, my youth's return'd, I tread in air!
—I cannot ſpeak; my joy's too great for utterance.
—Oh, I cou'd weep!—my ſons, my ſons are choſen
Their country's combatants; not one, but all!

Horatia. My brothers, ſaid you, Sir?
Horatius. All three, my child,
All three are champions in the cauſe of Rome.
Oh, happy ſtate of fathers! thus to feel
New warmth revive, and ſpringing life renew'd
Even on the margin of the grave!

Valeria. The time
Of combat, is it fix'd?

Horatius. This day, this hour
Perhaps decides our doom.

Valeria. And is it known
With whom they muſt engage?

Horatius. Not yet, *Valeria*;
But with impatience we expect each moment
The reſolutions of the Alban ſenate.
And ſoon may they arrive, that ere we quit
Yon hoſtile field, the chiefs who dar'd oppoſe
Rome's riſing glories, may with ſhame confeſs
The gods protect the empire they have rais'd.
Where are thy ſmiles, *Horatia*? Whence proceeds
This ſullen ſilence, when my thronging joys
Want words to ſpeak them? Pr'ythee, talk of empire,
Talk of thoſe darlings of my ſoul, thy brothers.
Call them whate'er wild fancy can ſuggeſt,
Their country's pride, the boaſt of future times,
The dear defence, the guardian gods of Rome!—
By Heaven, thou ſtaſt unmov'd, nor feels thy breaſt
The charms of glory, the extatic warmth
Which beams new life, and lifts us nearer Heaven!

Horatia. My gracious father, with ſurprize and tranſ-
I heard the tidings, as becomes your daughter. [port
And like your daughter, were our ſex allow'd
The noble privilege which man uſurps,
Could die with pleaſure in my country's cauſe.
But yet permit a ſiſter's weakneſs, Sir,
To feel the pangs of nature, and to dread
The fate of thoſe ſhe loves, however glorious.
And ſure they cannot all ſurvive a conflict
So deſperate as this.

Horatius. Survive! By Heaven,
I could not hope that they ſhould all ſurvive.
No; let them fall. If from their glorious deaths
Rome's freedom ſpring, I ſhall be nobly paid
For every ſharpeſt pang the parent feels.
Had I a thouſand ſons, in ſuch a cauſe
I could behold them bleeding at my feet,
And thank the gods with tears!

Enter *Publius Horatius*.

Pub. My father! [Offering to kneel.
Horatius. Hence!
Kneel not to me—ſtand off; and let me view
At diſtance, and with reverential awe,
The champion of my country!—Oh, my boy!
That I ſhould live to this—my ſoul's too full;

Let this and this speak for me.—Bless thee, bless thee!

[*Embracing him.*]

But wherefore art thou absent from the camp? Where are thy brothers? Has the Alban state Determin'd? Is the time of combat fix'd?

Pub. Think not, my lord, that filial reverence, However due, had drawn me from the field, Where nobler duty calls; a patriot's soul Can feel no humbler ties, nor knows the voice Of kindred, when his country claims his aid. It was the king's command I should attend you, Else had I staid till wreaths immortal grac'd My brows, and made thee proud indeed to see Beneath thy roof, and bending for thy blessing, Not thine, *Horatius*, but the son of Rome! [sits]

Horatius. Ob, virtuous pride!—'tis bliss too exquisite For human sense!—thus, let me answer thee.

[*Embracing him again.*]

Where are my other boys?

Pub. They only wait Till Alba's loit'ring chiefs declare her champions, Our future victims, Sir, and with the news Will greet their father's ear.

Horatius. It shall not need, Myself will to the field. Come, let us haste, My old blood boils, and my tumultuous spirits Pant for the onset. O, for one short hour Of vigorous youth, that I might share the toil Now with my boys, and be the next my last!

Horatia. My brother!

Pub. My *Horatia*! ere the dews Of evening fall thou shalt with transport own me; Shalt hold thy country's saviour in thy arms, Or bathe his honest bier with tears of joy. Thy lover greets thee, and complains of absence With many a sigh, and many a longing look Sent tow'rd the towers of Rome.

Horatia. Methinks, a lover Might take th' advantage of the truce, and bear His kind complaints himself; not trust his vows To other tongues, or be oblig'd to tell The passing winds his passion.

Pub. Dearest sister, He with impatience waits the lucky moment That may with honour bear him to your arms. Didst thou but hear how tenderly he talks, How blames the dull delay of Alban councils, And chides the ling'ring minutes as they pass, Till fate determines, and the tedious chiefs Permit his absence, thou would'st pity him. But soon, my sister, soon shall every bar Which thwarts thy happiness be far away. We are no longer enemies to Alba, This day unites us, and to-morrow's sun May hear thy vows, and make my friend my brother.

Horatius. [*Having talked apart with Valeria.*] 'Tis truly Roman.—Here's a maid, *Horatia*, Laments her brother lost the glorious proof Of dying for his country.—Come, my son, Her softness will infect thee; prythee leave her.

Horatia. [*Looking first on her father, and then tenderly on her brother.*] Not till my soul has pour'd it's wishes for him.

Hear me, dread god of war, protect and save him!

[*Kneeling.*]

For thee, and thy immortal Rome, he fights! Dast the proud spear from every hostile hand That dares oppose him; may each Alban chief Fly from his presence, or his vengeance feel! And when in triumph he returns to Rome, [*Rising.*] Hail him, ye maids, with grateful songs of praise, And scatter all the blooming spring before him; Curs'd be the envious brow that smiles not then,

Curs'd be the wretch that wears one mark of sorrow, Or flies not thus with open arms to greet him.

Enter Tullus Hostilius, Valerius, and Guards.

Valerius. The king, my lord, approaches.

Horatius. Gracious Sir,

Whence comes this condescension?

Tul. Good old man;

Could I have found a nobler messenger, I would have spar'd myself th' ungrateful task Of this day's embassy, for much I fear My news will want a welcome.

Horatius. Mighty king!

Forgive an old man's warmth—They have not sure Made choice of other combatants!—My sons, Must they not fight for Rome?

Tul. Too sure they must.

Horatius. Then I am blest!

Tul. But that they must engage

[whom.

Will hurt thee most, when thou shalt know with *Horatius.* I care not whom.

Tul. Suppose your nearest friends

The *Curatii* were the Alban choice.

Could you bear that? Could you, young man, support A conflict there?

Pub. I could perform my duty,

Great Sir, though even a brother should oppose me.

Tul. Thou art a Roman! Let thy king embrace thee.

Horatius. And let thy father catch thee from his arms.

Tul. [*To Publius.*] Know then that trial must be thine. The Albans

With envy saw one family produce

Three chiefs, to whom their country dared entrust The Roman cause, and scorn'd to be outdone.

Horatia. Then I am lost indeed; was it for this, For this I pray'd!

[*Seescons.*]

Pub. My sister!

Valeria. My *Horatia*! Oh, support her!

Horatius. Oh, foolish girl, to shame thy father thus! Here, bear her in.

[*Horatia is carried in, Valerius and Valeria follow.*]

I am concern'd, my sovereign, That even the meanest part of me should blast With impious grief a cause of so much glory. But let the virtue of my boy excuse it.

Tul. It does most amply. She has cause for sorrow.

The shock was sudden, and might well alarm A firmer bosom.

We leave her to her tears.—For you, young soldier, You must prepare for combat. Some few hours Are all that are allow'd you. But I charge you Try well your heart, and strengthen every thought

Of patriot in you. Think how dreadful 'tis To plant a dagger in the breast you love; To spurn the ties of nature, and forget In one short hour whole years of virtuous friendship. Think well on that.

Pub. I do, my gracious sovereign; And think the more I dare subdue affection, The more my glory.

Tul. True; but yet consider, Is it an easy task to change affections?

In the dread onset can your meeting eyes Forget their usual intercourse, and wear

At once the frown of war, and stern defiance?

Will not each look recal the fond remembrance

Of childhood past, when the whole open soul

Breath'd cordial love, and plighted many a vow

Of tend'rest import? Think on that, young soldier,

And tell me if thy breast be still unmov'd?

Pub. Think not, O king, howe'er resolv'd on I sit so loosely to the bonds of nature, [*combat,* As not to feel their force. I feel it strongly.

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I love the Curatii, and would serve them
At life's expence: but here a nobler cause
Demands my sword; for all connections else,
All private duties are subordinate
To what we owe the public. Partial ties
Of son and father, husband, friend or brother,
Owe their enjoyments to the public safety,
And without that were vain.—Nor need we, Sir,
Cast off humanity, and to be heroes
Cease to be men. As in our earliest days,
While yet we learn'd the exercise of war,
We strove together, not as enemies,
Yet conscious each of his peculiar worth,
And scorning each to yield; so will we now
Engage with ardent, not with hostile minds,
Not fir'd with rage, but emulous of fame.

Tul. Now I dare trust thee; go and teach thy bro-
To think like thee, and conquest is your own. [thers
This is true courage, not the brutal force
Of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve
Of virtue and of reason. He who thinks
Without their aid to shine in deeds of arms,
Builds on a sandy basis his renown;
A dream, a vapour, or an ague fit
May make a coward of him.—Come, Horatius,
Thy other sons shall meet thee at the camp,
For now I do bethink me 'tis not fit
They should behold their sister thus alarm'd.
Haste, soldier, and detain them. [To one of the guards.

Horatius. Gracious Sir,
We'll follow on the instant.

Tul. Then farewell.

When next we meet, 'tis Rome and liberty!

[Exit with guards.
Horatius. Come, let me arm thee for the glori-
ous toil.

I have a sword whose lightning oft has blaz'd
Dreadfully fatal to my country's foes;
Whose temper'd edge has cleft their haughty crests,
And stain'd with life-blood many a reeking plain:
This shall thou bear; myself will gird it on,
And lead thee forth to death or victory. [Going.
—And yet, my Publius, shall I own my weakness!
Though I detest the cause from whence they spring,
I feel thy sister's sorrows like a father.
She was my soul's delight.

Pub. And may remain so.

This sudden shock has but alarm'd her virtue,
Not quite subdued it's force. At least, my father,
Time's lenient hand will teach her to endure
The ills of chance, and reason conquer love.

Horatius. Should we not see her?

Pub. By no means my lord;

You heard the king's commands about my brothers,
And we have hearts as tender sure as they.
Might I advise, you should confine her closely,
Lest the insect matrons with her grief,
And bring a stain we should not wish to fix
On the Horatian name.

Horatius. It shall be so.

We'll think no more of her. 'Tis glory calls,
And humbler passions beat alarms in vain. [Exit.
[As Horatius goes off, Horatia enters at another door.

Horatia. Where is my brother?—Oh, my dearest
If e'er you lov'd Horatia, ever felt [Publius,
That tenderness which you have seem'd to feel,
Oh, hear her now!

Pub. What would'st thou, my Horatia? [rack,

Horatia. I know not what I would—I'm on the
Despair and madness tear my lab'ring soul.

—And yet, my brother, sure you might relieve me.

Pub. How! by what means? By Heaven, I'll
do to do it.

Horatia. You might decline the combat.

Pub. Ha!

Horatia. I do not

Expect it from thee. Pr'ythee look more kindly.

—And yet, is the request so very hard?

I only ask thee not to plunge thy sword
Into the breast thou lov'st, not kill thy friend;
Is that so hard?—I might have said thy brother.

Pub. What can'st thou mean? Beware, beware,

Horatia;

Thou know'st I dearly love thee, nay, thou know'st
I love the man with whom I must engage.
Yet hast thou faintly read thy brother's soul,
If thou can'st think entreaties have the power,
Though urg'd with all the tenderness of tears,
To shake his settled purpose: they may make
My task more hard, and my soul bleed within me,
But cannot touch my virtue.

Horatia. 'Tis not virtue

Which contradicts our nature, 'tis the rage
Of over-weening pride. Has Rome no champions
She could oppose but you? Are there not thousands
As warm for glory, and as tried in arms,
Who might without a crime aspire to conquest,
Or die with honest fame?

Pub. Away, away!

Talk to thy lover thus. But 'tis not Caius
Thou would'st have infamous.

Horatia. Oh, kill me not

With such unkind reproaches. Yes, I own
I love him, more—

Pub. Than a chaste Roman maid

Should dare confess.

Horatia. Should dare! What means my brother?

I had my father's sanction on my love,
And duty taught me first to feel it's power.
—Should dare confess!—Is that the dreadful crime?
Alas, but spare him, spare thy friend, Horatius,
And I will cast him from my breast for ever.
Will that oblige thee? [Still!

Pub. Why wilt thou talk thus madly? Love him
And if we fall the victims of our country,
(Which Heav'n avert!) wed, and enjoy him freely.

Horatia. Oh, never, never. What, my country's
bane!

The murderer of my brothers! may the gods
First pour out each unheard-of vengeance on me!

Pub. Do not torment thyself thus idly—Go,
Compose thyself, and be again my sister.

Re-enter Horatius, with the Sword.

Horatius. This sword in Veii's field—What dost
thou here?

Leave him, I charge thee, girl—Come, come, my
Let's haste where duty calls. [Publius,

Horatia. What! to the field?

He must not, shall not go; here will I hang—

Oh, if you have not quite cast off affection!

If you detest not your distracted sister—

Horatius. Shame of thy race, why dost thou hang
Would'st thou entail eternal infamy [upon him;
On him, on me, on all?

Horatia. Indeed I would not.

I know I ask impossibilities;

Yet pity me, my father!

Pub. Pity thee!

Be gone, fond wretch, nor urge my temper thus.

By Heaven I love thee as a brother ought.

Then hear my last resolve; if fate, averse

To Rome and us, determine my destruction,

I charge thee wed thy lover; he will then

Deserve thee nobly. Or, if kinder gods

Propitious hear the prayers of suppliant Rome,

And he should fall by me, I then expect

No weak upbraidings for a lover's death,
But such returns as shall become thy birth,
A sister's thanks for having sav'd her country. [Exit
Horatia. Yet stay—Yet hear me, Publius—But
one word.

Horatius. Forbear, rash girl, thou'lt tempt thy fa-
To do an outrage might perhaps distract him. [ther

Horatia. Alas, forgive me, Sir—I'm very wretched,
Indeed I am—Yet I will strive to stop

This swelling grief, and bear it like your daughter.
Do but forgive me, Sir.

Horatius. I do, I do—

Go in, my child, the gods may find a way
To make thee happy yet. But on thy duty,
Whate'er reports may reach, or fears alarm thee,
I charge thee come not to the field.

Horatia. I will not,

If you command it, Sir. But will you then,
As far as cruel honour may permit,
Remember that your poor Horatia's life
Hangs on this dreadful contest? [Exit Horatia.

Horatius. [Looking after her.] Spite of my boasted
strength, her griefs unman me.

—But let her from my thoughts! The patriot's breast
No hopes, no fears, but for his country knows;
And in her danger loses private woes. [Exit.

A C T III.

The SCENE continues.

Valerius and Valeria meeting.

Valerius. NOW, my Valeria, where's the
charming she

That calls me to her? with a lover's haste
I fly to execute the dear command.

Valeria. 'Tis not the lover, but the friend she
If thou dar'st own that name. [wants

Valerius. The friend, my sister!
There's more than friendship in a lover's breast,
More warm, more tender, is the flame he feels—

Valeria. Alas! these raptures suit not her distress:
She seeks th' indulgent friend, whose sober sense,
Free from the mists of passion, might direct
Her jarring thoughts, and plead her doubtful cause.

Valerius. Am I that friend? Oh, did she turn
On me for that kind office? [her thought

Valeria. Yes, Valerius,
She chose you out to be her advocate
To Curatius; 'tis the only hope
She now dares cherish; her relentless brother
With scorn rejects her tears, her father flies her,
And only you remain to sooth her cares,
And save her ere she sinks.

Valerius. Her advocate
To Curatius!

Valeria. 'Tis to him she sends you,
To urge her suit, and win him from the field.
But come, her sorrows will more strongly plead
Than all my grief can utter.

Valerius. To my rival!
To Curatius plead her cause, and trach
My tongue a lesson which my heart abhors!
Impossible! Valeria, pr'ythee say
Thou'lt not; the business of the camp
Confin'd me here. Farewel. [Going

Valeria. What means my brother?
You cannot leave her now; for shame, turn back!
Is this the virtue of a Roman youth?
Oh, by this dear!

Valerius. They bow in vain, Valeria:
Nay, and thus know it they do, O earth and heaven!

This combat was the means my happier stars
Found out to save me from the brink of ruin;
And can I plead against it, turn assassin
On my own life?

Valeria. Yet thou can'st murder her
Thou dost pretend to love; away, deceiver!
I'll seek some worthier messenger to plead
In beauty's cause; but first inform Horatia,
How much Valerius is the friend she thought him.

[Going.

Valerius. Oh, heavens! stay, sister; 'tis an ar-
duous task.

Valeria. I know the task is hard, and thought I
Thy virtue too. [knew

Valerius. I must, I will obey thee.
Lead on.—Yet pr'ythee, for a moment leave me,
Till I can recollect my scatter'd thoughts,
And dare to be unhappy.

Valeria. My Valerius!
I fly to tell her you but wait her pleasure. [Exit.

Valerius. Yes, I will undertake this hateful office;
It never can succeed.—Yet at this instant
It may be dangerous, while the people melt
With fond compassion.—No, it cannot be;
His resolution's fix'd, and virtuous pride
Forbids an alteration. To attempt it
Makes her my friend, and may afford hereafter
A thousand tender hours to move my suit.
That hope determines all. [Exit.

SCENE, another Apartment.

Horatia and Valeria. Horatia with a Scarf in her
Hand.

Horatia. Where is thy brother? Wherefore stays
he thus?

Did you conjure him? did he say he'd come?
I have no brothers now, and fly to him
As my last refuge. Did he seem averse
To thy intreaties? Are all brothers so?

Valeria. Dear maid,
Restrain your sorrows; I've already told you
My brother will with transport execute
Whatever you command.

Horatia. Oh! wherefore then
Is he away? Each moment now is precious;
If lost, 'tis lost for ever; and if gain'd,
Long scenes of lasting peace, and smiling years
Of happiness unhop'd-for, wait upon it.

Valeria. I will again go seek him; pray, be calm;
Success is thine if it depends on him. [Exit.

Horatia. Success! alas, perhaps ev'n now too late
I labour to preserve him; the dread arm
Of vengeance is already stretch'd against him,
And he must fall. Yet let me strive to save him.
Yes, thou dear pledge, design'd for happier hours,

[To the scarf.

The gift of nuptial love, thou shalt at least
Essay thy power.

Oft as I fram'd the web,
He sat beside me, and would say in sport,
This present, which thy love designs for me,
Shall be the future bond of peace betwixt us.
By this we'll swear a lasting love, by this,
Through the sweet round of all our days to come,
Ask what thou wilt, and Curatius grants it.
O I shall try thee nearly now, dear youth;
Glory and I are rivals for thy heart,
And one must conquer.

Enter Valerius and Valeria.

Valerius. Save you, gracious lady;
On the first message which my sister sent me
I had been here, but was oblig'd by office,
Ere to their champions each resign'd her charge,
To satisfy the league 'twixt Rome and Alba,

Horatia. Are they engag'd then?

Valerius. No, not yet engag'd;
Soft pity for a while suspends the onset;
The fight of near relations, arm'd in fight
Against each other, touch'd the gazers hearts;
And senators on each side have propos'd
To change the combatants.

Horatia. My blessings on them!
Think you they will succeed?

Valerius. The chiefs themselves
Are resolute to fight.

Horatia. Insatiate virtue!
I must not to the field; I am confin'd
A prisoner here; or sure these tears would move
Their flinty breasts.—Is Curiatius too
Resolv'd on death?—O Sir, forgive a maid,
Who dares in spite of modesty confess
Too soft a passion. Will you pardon me,
If I intreat you to the field again,
An humble suitor from the veriest wretch
That ever knew distress.

Valerius. Dear lady, speak!
What would you I should do?

Horatia. O bear this to him.

Valerius. To whom?

Horatia. To Curiatius bear this scarf:
And tell him, if he ever truly lov'd;
If all the vows he breath'd were not false lures
To catch th' unwary mind—and sure they were not!
O tell him how he may with honour cease
To urge his cruel right; the senators
Of Rome and Alba will approve such mildness.
Tell him, his wife, if he will own that name,
Intreats him from the field; his lost Horatia
Begg on her trembling knees he would not tempt
A certain fate, and murder her he loves.
Tell him, if he consents, she fondly swears,
By every god the varying world adores,
To know no brothers and no fire but him;
With him, if honour's harsh commands require it,
She'll wander forth, and seek some distant home,
Nor ever think of Rome or Alba more.

Valerius. Could I, sweet lady,
But paint your grief with half the force I feel it,
I need but tell it him, and he must yield. [him,
Horatia. It may be so. Stay, stay; be sure you tell
If he rejects my suit, no power on earth
Shall force me to his arms. I will devise—
I'll die and be reveng'd!

Valeria. Away, my brother!
But, oh! for pity, do your office justly! [Aside to Val.
Let not your passion blind your reason now;
But urge your cause with ardour.

Valerius. By my soul,
I will, Valeria. Her distress alarms me;
And I have now no interest but her's. [Exit.

Horatia. He's gone—I had a thousand things—
And yet I'm glad he's gone. Think you, Valeria,
Your brother will delay?—They may engage
Before he reaches them.

Valeria. The field's so near,
That a few minutes brings him to the place.
My dear Horatia, success is yours already.

Horatia. And yet, should I succeed, the hard-
gall'd strife

May chance to rob me of my future peace.
He may not always with the eyes of love
Look on that fondness which has stabb'd his fame.
He may regret too late the sacrifice
He made to law, and a fond woman's weakness;
And think the milder joys of social life
But ill repay him for the mighty loss
Of patriot-reputation!

Valeria. Pray forbear;

And search not thus into eventful time
For ills to come.
Like some distemper'd wretch, your wayward mind
Rejects all nourishment, or turns to gall
The very balm that should relieve it's anguish.
He will admire thy love, which could persuade him
To give up glory for the milder triumph
Of heart-felt ease and soft humanity. [of him.

Horatia. I fain would hope so. Yet we hear not
Your brother, much I fear, has sued in vain.
Could we not send to urge this slow express?—
This dread uncertainty! I long to know
My life or death at once.

Valeria. Shall I to the walls?
I may from thence with ease survey the field,
And can dispatch a messenger each moment,
To tell thee all goes well.

Horatia. My best Valeria!
Fly then;
Thou art a Roman maid; and tho' thy friendship
Detains thee here with one who scarce deserves
That sacred name, art anxious for thy country.
But yet for charity think kindly of me;
For thou shalt find by the event, Valeria,
I am a Roman too, however wretched. [Exit Valeria.
Am I a Roman then? Ye powers I dare not
Resolve the fatal question I propose.
If dying would suffice, I were a Roman:
But to stand up against this storm of passions,
Transcends a woman's weakness. Hark! what
noise?—

'Tis news from Curiatius!—Love, I thank thee!

Enter a Servant.

Well, does he yield? Distract me not with silence.
Say, in one word—

Serv. Your father—

Horatia. What of him?
Would he not let him yield? Oh, cruel father!

Serv. Madam, he's here—

Horatia. Who?

Serv. Borne by his attendants.

Horatia. What mean'st thou?

Enter Horatius, lead in by his Servants.

Horatius. Lead me yet a little onward;
I shall recover straight.
Horatia. My gracious sire! [child,
Horatius. Lend me thy arm, Horatia—So—My
Be not surpris'd; an old man must expect
These little shocks of nature: they are him
To warn us of our end.

Horatia. How are you, Sir? [could not
Horatius. Better, much better. My frail body
Support the swelling tumult of my soul.

Horatia. No accident, I hope, alarm'd you, Sir!
My brothers—

Horatius. Here, go to the field again,
You, Cautus and Vindicus, and observe
Each circumstance. I shall be glad to hear
The manner of the fight.

Horatia. Are they engaged? [thank thee
Horatius. They are, Horatia. But first let me
For staying from the field. I would have seen
The fight myself; but this unlucky illness
Has forc'd me to retire. Where is thy friend?

Enter a Servant, who gives a Paper to Horatia, and
retires.

What paper's that; Why dost thou tremble so?
Here, let me open it. [Takes the paper and opens it.
From Curiatius!

Horatia. Oh, keep me not in this suspense, my
Relieve me from the rack. [Father!

Horatius. He tells thee here;

He dare not do an action that would make him
Unworthy of thy love ; and therefore——

Horatia. Dies!——

Well—I am satisfied.

Horatius. I see by this

Thou hast endeavour'd to persuade thy lover
To quit the combat. Could'st thou think, *Horatia*,
He'd sacrifice his country to a woman?

Horatia. I know not what I thought. He proves
Whate'er it was, I was deceiv'd in him [too plainly,
Whom I applied to.

Horatius. Do not think so daughter ;
Could he with honour have declin'd the fight,
I should myself have join'd in thy request,
And forc'd him from the field. But think, my child,
Had he consented, and had *Alba's* cause,
Supported by another arm, been baffled,
What then could'st thou expect ! Would he not curse
His foolish love, and hate thee for thy fondness ?
Nay, think, perhaps, 'twas artifice in thee
To aggrandize thy race, and lift their fame
Triumphant o'er his ruin and his country's.

Think well on that, and reason must convince thee.
Horatia. [Wildly.] Alas ! had reason ever yet the
power

To talk down grief, or bid the tortur'd wretch
Not feel his anguish ? 'Tis impossible.
Could reason govern, I should now rejoice
They were engag'd, and count the tedious moments
Till conquest smil'd, and *Rome* again was free.
Could reason govern, I should beg of Heaven
To guide my brother's sword, and plunge it deep
E'en in the bosom of the man I love :
I should forget he ever won my soul,
Forget 'twas your command that bade me love him ;
Nay, fly perhaps to yon detested field,
And spurn with scorn his mangled body from me.

Horatius. Why wilt thou talk thus ? Pr'ythee be
more calm.

I can forgive thy tears ; they flow from nature ;
And could have gladly with'd the *Alban* state
Had found us other enemies to vanquish.
But Heaven has will'd it, and Heaven's will be done !
The glorious expectation of success
Buys up my soul, nor lets a thought intrude
To dash my promis'd joys ! What steady valour
Beams from their eyes : just so, if fancy's power
May form conjecture from his after-age,
Rome's founder must have look'd, when, warm in
youth,

And flush'd with future conquest, forth he march'd
Against proud *Acron*, with whose bleeding spoils
He grac'd the altar of *Feretrarian Jove*——
Methinks I feel recover'd ; I might venture
Forth to the field again. What ho ! *Volscinius* !
Attend me to the camp.

Horatia. My dearest father,
Let me intreat you stay ; the tumult there
Will discompose you, and a quick relapse
May prove most dangerous. I'll restrain my tears,
If they offend you.

Horatius. Well, I'll be advis'd. [quer'd.
'Twere now too late ; ere this they must have con-
And here's the happy messenger of glory.

Enter Valeria.

Valeria. All's lost, all's ruin'd ! freedom is no more !

Horatius. What dost thou say ?

Valeria. That *Rome's* subdu'd by *Alba*. [dead ?

Horatius. It cannot be. Where are my sons ? All

Valeria. *Publius* is still alive—the other two
Have paid the fatal debt they ow'd their country.

Horatius. *Publius* alive ! You must mistake, *Valeria*.
He knows his duty better.

He must be dead, or *Rome* victorious.

Valeria. Thousands as well as I beheld the combat,
After his brother's death he stood alone,
And acted wonders against three assailants ;
Till forc'd at last to save himself by flight——

Horatius. By flight ! And did the soldiers let him
Oh, I am ill again !—The coward villain ! [pals ?
[Throwing himself into his chair.

Horatia. Alas, my brothers !

Horatius. Weep not for them, girl. [envy ;
They've died a death which kings themselves might
And whilst they liv'd they saw their country free.
Oh, had I perish'd with them !—But for him
Whose impious flight dishonours all his race,
Tears a fond father's heart, and tamely barter
For poor precarious life his country's glory.

Weep, weep for him, and let me join my tears !

Valeria. What could he do, my lord, when three

Horatius. Die ! [oppos'd him ?
And he shall die ; this arm shall sacrifice
The life he dar'd preserve with infamy.

What means this weakness ? [Endeavouring to rise.

'Tis untimely now,
When I should punish an ungrateful boy.
Was this his boasted virtue, which could charm
His cheated sovereign, and brought tears of joy
To my old eyes ?—So young a hypocrite !
Oh, shame, shame, shame !

Valeria. Have patience, Sir ; all *Rome*
Beheld his valour, and approv'd his flight
Against such opposition.

Horatius. Tell not me !
What's *Rome* to me ? *Rome* may excuse her traitors ;
But I'm the guardian of my house's honour,
And I will punish. Pray ye, lead me forth ;
I would have air. But grant me strength, kind gods,
To do this act of justice, and I'll own,
Whate'er gainst *Rome* your awful wills decree,
You still are just and merciful to me. [Exit.



ACT IV.

SCENE, *A Room in Horatius's House.*

Enter Horatius, Valeria following.

Horatius. A WAY, away !—I feel my strength
renew'd,
And I will hunt the villain thro' the world :
No darkness shall conceal, nor darkness hide him.
He is well skill'd in flight, but he shall find
'Tis not so easy to elude the vengeance
Of a wrong'd father's arm, as to escape
His adversary's sword.

Valeria. Refrain your rage
But for a moment, Sir. When you shall hear
The whole unravell'd, you will find he's innocent ;
Horatius. It cannot be.

Valeria. And see, my brother comes.

He may perhaps relate——

Horatius. I will not hear him ;
I will not listen to my shame again.

Enter Valerius. [king,

Valerius. I come with kind condolence from the
To sooth a father's grief, and to express——

Horatius. I've heard it all ; I pray you spare my
I want not consolation ; 'tis enough [blushes.

They perish'd for their country. But the third——

Valerius. True, he indeed may well supply your loss,
And calls for all your fondness.

Horatius. All my vengeance ;

And he shall have it, Sir.

Valerius. Vengeance!

My lord! what fault has he committed?

Horatius. Why will you double my confusion thus?
Is flight no fault?

Valerius. In such a cause as his
'Twas glorious.

Horatius. Glorious! Oh, rare sophistry!
To find a way through infamy to glory!

Valerius. I scarce can trust my senses—Infamy!

What, was it infamous to save his country?

Is not a crime? Is it the name of flight?

We can't forgive, though it's ador'd effect

Restor'd us all to freedom, fame and empire?

Horatius. What fame, what freedom? Who has
sav'd his country?

Valerius. Your son, my lord, has done it.

Horatius. How, when, where?

Valerius. Is't possible? Did you not say you knew?

Horatius. I care not what I knew—Oh, tell me all!

Is Rome still free?—Has Alba?—Has my son?—
Tell me—

Valerius. Your son, my lord, has slain her cham-

Horatius. What, Publius? [pions.

Valerius. Aye, Publius.

Horatius. Oh, let me clasp thee to me!—

Were there not three remaining?

Valerius. True, there were;
But wounded all.

Horatius. Your sister here had told us
That Rome was vanquish'd, that my son was fled—

Valerius. And he did fly; but 'twas that flight
preserv'd us.

All Rome as well as she has been deceiv'd.

Horatius. Let me again embrace thee—Come,

Did I not say, Valeria, that my boy [relate it.

Must needs be dead, or Rome victorious?

I long to hear the manner—Well, Valerius—

Valerius. Your other sons, my lord, had paid the
They ow'd to Rome, and he alone remain'd [debt
'Gainst three opponents, whose united strength,
Tho' wounded each, and robb'd of half their force,
Was still too great for his. A while he stood
Their fierce assaults, and then pretended flight
Only to tire his wounded adversaries.

Horatius. Pretended flight, and this succeeded, ha!
Oh, glorious boy!

Valerius. 'Twas better still, my lord;

For all pursued, but not with equal speed.

Each, eager for the conquest, press'd to reach him;

Nor did the first, till 'twas too late, perceive

His fainter brothers panting far behind.

Horatius. He took them singly then? An easy

'Twas boy's play only. [conquest;

Valerius. Never did I see

Such universal joy, as when the last

Sunk on the ground beneath Horatius' sword;

Who seem'd a while to parley as a friend,

And would have given him life, but Caius scorn'd it.

Valerius. Caius! Oh, poor Horatia!

Horatius. Peace, I charge thee.

Go, dress thy face in smiles, and bid thy friend,

Wake to new transports. Let ambition fire her.

What is a lover lost? There's not a youth

In Rome but will adore her. Kings will seek

For her alliance now, and mightiest chiefs

Be honour'd by her smiles. Will they not, youth?

[Exit Valeria.

Valerius. Most sure, my lord, this day has added

To her whose merit was before unquall'd. [worth

Horatius. How could I doubt his virtue!

Mighty gods!

This is true glory, to preserve his country,

And bid by one brave act the Horatian name

In fame's eternal volumes be enroll'd.

—Gracious Heaven!

Where is he? Let me fly, and at his feet
Forget the father, and implore a pardon
For such injustice.

Valerius. The king ere this has from the field
dispatch'd him;—

But hark! that shout

Which sounds from far, and seems the mingled voice
Of thousands, speaks him onward on his way.

Horatius. How my heart dances!—Yet I blush to
meet him.

But I will on. Come, come, Horatia; leave

[Calling at the door.

Thy sorrow far behind, and let us fly

With open arms to greet our common glory. [Exit.

Enter Horatia and Valeria.

Horatia. Yes, I will go; this father's hard com-
mand

Shall be obey'd; and I will meet the conqueror,
But not in smiles.

Valerius. Oh, go not, gentle lady!

Might I advise—

Valeria. Your griefs are yet too fresh,

And may offend him. Do not, my Horatia.

Valerius. Indeed 'twere better to avoid his presence;

It will revive your sorrows, and recal—

Horatia. Sir, when I saw you last I was a woman,

The fool of nature, and fond prey to grief,

Made up of sighs and tears. But now my soul

Disdains the very thought of what I was;

'Tis grown too callous to be mov'd with toys.

Observe me well; am I not nobly chang'd?

Flow my sad eyes, or heaves my breast one groan?

No; for I doubt no longer. 'Tis not grief,

'Tis resolution now, and fix'd despair. [me;

Valeria. My dear Horatia, you strike terrors thro'

What dreadful purpose hast thou form'd? oh, speak!

Valerius. Hear me yet, sweet lady.

You must not go; whatever you resolve,

There is a fight will pierce you to the soul.

Horatia. What fight?

Valerius. Alas, I should be glad to hide it;

But it is—

Horatia. What?

Valerius. Your brother wears in triumph

The very scarf I bore to Curiatius.

Horatia. [Wildly.] Ye gods, I thank ye! 'tis
with joy I hear it.

If I should satter now, that fight would rouse

My drooping rage, and swell the tempest louder.

—But soft; they may prevent me; my wild passion

Betrays my purpose—I'll dissemble with them.

[She sits down.

Valerius. She softens now.

Valeria. How do you, my Horatia? [utter—

Horatia. Alas, my friend, 'tis madness which I

Since you persuade me than, I will not go.

But leave me to myself; I would sit here;

Alone in silent sadness pour my tears,

And meditate on my unheard-of woes.

Valerius. [To Valeria.] 'Twere well to humour

this. But may the not,

If left alone, do outrage on herself.

Valeria. I have prevented that; she has not near

One instrument of death. [her

Valerius. Retire we then.

[Exit Valerius and Valeria.

After a short silence, Horatia rises, and comes forward.

Horatia. Yes, they are gone; and now be firm, my

This way I can elude their search. The heart [soul!

Which doats like mine, must break to be at ease.

Just now I thought, had Curiatius liv'd,

I could have driven him from my breast for ever.
But death has cancell'd all my wrongs at once.
—They were not wrongs; 'twas virtue which undid us;

And virtue shall unite us in the grave.
I heard them say, as they departed hence,
That they had robb'd me of all means of death.
Vain thought! they knew not half Horatio's purpose.

Be resolute, my brother; let no weak
Unmanly fondness mingle with thy virtue,
And I will touch thee nearly. Oh, come on,
'Tis thou alone can'st give Horatia peace. [Exit.

A C T V.

SCENE, a Street of Rome.

Chorus of Youths and Virgins singing and scattering Branches of Oak, Flowers, &c. Then enters Horatius leaning on the Arm of Publius Horatius.

Chorus. **T**HUS, for freedom nobly won,
Rome her hasty tribute pours;
And on one victorious son
Half exhausts her blooming stores.

A Youth. Scatter here the laurel crown,
Emblem of immortal praise!
Wond'rous youth! to thy renown
Future times shall altars raise.

A Virgin. Scatter here the myrtle wreath,
Though the bloodless victor's due;
Grateful thousands sav'd from death
Shall devote that wreath to you.

A Youth. Scatter here the oaken bough;
E'en for one averted fate
We that civic meed bestow—
He sav'd all who sav'd the state.

Chorus. Thus for freedom, &c.

Horatius. Thou dost forgive me then, my dearest
I cannot tell thee half my ecstasy. [boy!
The day which gave thee first to my glad hopes
Was misery to this—I'm mad with transport!
Why are ye silent there? Again renew
Your songs of praise, and in a louder strain
Pour forth your joy, and tell the list'ning spheres
That Rome is freed by my Horatius' hand.

Pub. No more, my friends.—You must permit me,
To contradict you here. Not but my soul,
Like yours, is open to the charms of praise:
There is no joy beyond it, when the mind
Of him who hears it can with honest pride
Confess it just, and listen to it's music.
But now the toil I have sustain'd require
Their interval of rest, and every sense
Is deaf to pleasure.—Let me leave you, friends;
We're near our home, and would be private now:
To-morrow we'll expect your kind attendance
To share our joys, and waft our thanks to Heaven.

[As they are going off Horatia rushes in.

Horatia. Where is this mighty chief?

Horatius. My daughter's voice!

I bade her come; she has forgot her sorrows,
And is again my child.

Horatia. Is this the hero
That tramples nature's ties, and nobly soars
Above the dictates of humanity?
Let me observe him well,

Pub. What means my sister?

Horatia. Thy sister! I disclaim the impious title;
Base and inhuman! Give me back my husband,
My life, my soul, my murder'd Curatius!

Pub. He perish'd for his country.

Horatia. Gracious gods,
Was't not enough that thou hadst murder'd him,
But thou must triumph in thy guilt, and wear
His bleeding spoils?—Oh, let me tear them from thee,

Drink the dear drops that issu'd from his wounds,
More dear to me than the whole tide that swells
With impious pride a hostile brother's heart.

Horatius. Am I awake, or is it all illusion!

Was it for this thou cam'st?

Pub. Horatia, hear me.

Yet I am calm, and can forgive thy folly;
Would I could call it by no harsher name.
But do not tempt me faster.—Go, my sister,
Go hide thee from the world, nor let a Roman
Know with what insolence thou dar'st avow
Thy infamy, or what is more, my shame,
How tamely I forgave it.—Go, Horatia.

Horatia. I will not go—What have I touch'd thee then?

And can'st thou feel?—Oh, think not thou shalt lose
Thy share of anguish. I'll pursue thee still,
I'll be thy fury that shall haunt thy dreams;
Wake thee with shrieks, and place before thy sight
Thy mangled friends in all their pomp of horror.

Pub. Away with her! 'tis womanish complaining.
Think'st thou such trifles can alarm the man
Whose noblest passion is his country's love?

Horatia. Curse on my country's love, the trick ye teach us

To make us slaves beneath the mask of virtue;
To rob us of each soft endearing sense,
And violate the first great law within us.
I scorn the impious passion.

Pub. Have a care;

Thou'st touch'd a string which may awake my vengeance.

Horatia. [Aside.] Then it shall.

Pub. Oh, if thou dar'st prophane

That sacred tie which winds about my heart,
By heaven I swear, by the great gods who rule
The fate of empires, 'tis not this fond weakness
Which hangs upon me, and retards my justice,
Nor even thy sex, which shall protect thee from me,
[Clapping his hand on his sword.

Horatius. Drag her away—thou'lt make me curse thee, girl—

Indeed she's mad. [To Publius.

Horatia. Stand off, I am not mad—

Nay, draw thy sword; I do defy thee, murderer,
Barbarian, Roman!—Mad! The name of Rome
Makes madmen of you all; my curses on it.
Rise, rise, ye slaves, (Oh, that my voice could fire
Your tardy wrath!) confound it's selfish greatness,
Raze it's proud walls, and lay it's towers in ashes!

Pub. I'll bear no more— [Drawing his sword.

Horatius. Distraction!—Force her off—

Horatia. [Struggling.] Could I but prove the
Helen to deKroy

This curs'd unsocial state, I'd die with transport;
Gaze on the spreading fires—till the last pile
Sunk in the blaze—then mingle with it's ruins,
Pub. Thou shalt not live to that.

[Exit after her.
Thus perish all the enemies of Rome. [Exit.

Re-enter Valerius.

Valerius. Oh, horror! horror! execrable act;
If there be law in Rome, if there be justice,

By Rome, and all it's gods, thou shalt not 'scape.

[Exit.]

Re-enter Publius, followed by Horatia wounded.

Horatia. Now thou'lt indeed been kind, and forgive you

The death of Curiatius; this last blow
Has cancell'd all, and thou'rt again my brother.

Horatius. Heavens! what a sight!
A daughter bleeding by a brother's hand!
My child! my child!

Horatia. What means this tenderness? I thought
to see you

Inflam'd with rage against a worthless wretch
Who has dishonour'd your illustrious race,
And stain'd it's brightest fame: in pity look not
Thus kindly on me, for I have injur'd you.

Horatius. Thou hast not girl;
I said 'twas madness, but he would not hear me.

Horatia. Oh, wrong him not; his act was noble
justice,

I forc'd him to the deed; for know, my father,
It was not madness, but the firm refusal
Of settled reason, and deliberate thought.
I was resolv'd on death, and witness Heaven,
I'd not have died by any hand but his,
For the whole round of fame his worth shall boast
Through future ages.

Horatius. What hast thou said? Wert thou so
bent on death?

Was all thy rage dissembled?

Horatia. Alas, my father!

All but my love was false; what that inspir'd
I utter'd freely.

But for the rest, the curses which I pour'd
On heaven-defended Rome, were merely lures
To tempt his rage, and perfect my destruction.
Heaven! with what transport I beheld him mov'd!
How my heart leap'd to meet the welcome point,
Stain'd with the life-blood of my Curiatius,
Cementing thus our union ev'n in death.

Pub. My sister live! I charge thee live, Horatia!
Oh, thou hast plant'd daggers here.

Horatia. My brother!

Can you forgive me too! then I am happy.
I dar'd not hope for that? Ye gentle ghosts
That rove Elysium, hear the sacred sound!
My father and my brother both forgive me!
I have again their faction on my love.
Oh let me hasten to those happier climes,
Where unmolested, we may share our joys,
Nor Rome, nor Alba, shall disturb us more.

[Dies.]

Horatius. 'Tis gone, the prop, the comfort of my
age.

Let me reflect; this morn I had three children,
No happier father hail'd the sun's uprising:
Now, I have none; for, Publius, thou must die,
Blood calls for blood—to expiate one parricide,
Justice demands another—Art thou ready?

Pub. Strike! 'tis the consummation of my
wishes

To die, and by your hand.

Horatius. Oh, blind old man!

Would'st thou lift up thy sacrilegious hand
Against the chief, the god that sav'd thy country?
There's something in that face, that awes my soul,
Like a divinity. Hence, thou vile weapon,
Disgrace my hand no more.

[A cry without. Justice! Justice!
What noise is that?

Enter Volscinius.

Vol. All Rome, my lord, has taken the alarm,
and crowds

Of citizens cov'g'd, are posting hither:
To call for justice one the head of Publius.

Horatius. Ungrateful men! how dare they? Let
them come.

Enter Tullius, Valerius, and Citizens.

Valerius. See, fellow citizens, see where she lies,
The bleeding victim.

Tul. Stop, unmanner'd youth!

Think'st thou we know not wherefore we are here?
Seest thou yon drooping fire?

Horatius. Permit them, Sir.

Tul. What would you Romans?

Valerius. We are come, dread Sir,
In the behalf of murder'd innocence;
Murder'd by him, the man—

Horatius. Whose conquering arm
Has sav'd you all from ruin. Oh, shame! shame!
Has Rome no gratitude? Do ye not blush
To think whom your insatiate rage pursues?
Down, down, and worship him.

1st Citizen. Does he plead for him?

2d Citizen. Does he forgive his daughter's death?

Horatius. He does,

And glories in it, glories in the thought
That there's one Roman left who dares be grateful;
If you are wrong'd, then what am I? Must I
Be taught my duty by th' affected tears
Of strangers to my blood? Had I been wrong'd,
I know a father's right, and had not ask'd
This ready-talking Sir, to bellow for me,
And mouth my wrongs in Rome.

Valerius. Friends, countrymen, regard not what
he says;

Stop, stop your ears, nor hear a frantic father
Thus plead against his child.

Horatius. He does belye me.

What child have I? Alas! I have but one,
And him you would tear from me.

All Citizens. Hear him! hear him!

Pub. No; let me speak. Think'st thou, un-
grateful youth,

To hurt my qu'et? I am hurt beyond
Thy power to harm me. Death's extremest tortures
Were happiness to what I feel. Yet know,
My injur'd honour bids me live; nay, more,
It bids me even descend to plead for life.
But wherefore waste I words? 'Tis not to him,
But you, my countrymen, to you, I speak;
He lov'd the maid.

1st Citizen. How! lov'd her!

Pub. Fondly lov'd her;

And under shew of public justice, screens
A private passion, and a mean revenge.
Think you I lov'd her not? High Heaven's my witness
How tenderly I lov'd her; and the pangs
I feel this moment, could you see my heart,
'Twould prove too plainly, I am still her brother.

1st Citizen. He shall be sav'd.

Valerius has mis'd us.

All Citizens. Save him! save him!

Tul. If yet a doubt remains,

Behold that virtuous father, who could boast
This very morn, a numerous progeny,
The dear supports of his declining age;
Then read the sad reverse with pitying eyes,
And tell your conscious hearts they fell for you.

Horatius. I am o'erpaid by that, nor claim I
ought

On their accounts; by high Heaven, I swear,
I'd rather see him added to the heap,
Than Rome enslav'd.

1st Citizen. Oh, excellent Horatius!

All Citizens. Save him! save him!

Tu! Then I pronounce him free. And now,
 Horatius, let gods and angels
 The evening of thy stormy day at last
 Shall close in peace. Here, take him to thy breast.
 Horatius. My son, my conqueror! 'twas a fatal
 stroke,
 But shall not wound our peace. This kind embrace
 Shall spread a sweet oblivion o'er our sorrows;
 Or, if in after times, though 'tis not long
 That I shall trouble you, some sad remembrance,

Should steal a sigh, and peevish age forget
 It's resolution, only boldly say
 Thou sav'dst the state, and I'll entreat forgiveness.
 Learn hence, ye Romans, on how sure a base
 The patriot builds his happiness;
 Grief may to grief in endless round succeed,
 And nature suffer when our children bleed;
 But still superior must that hero prove,
 Whose first, best passion, is his country's love.

[*Exeunt omnes.*]



7 MA 55

OLD D. L. H. G.

75

What is the name of the man who is the subject of this sketch?



MA 55